



Mental Health Update

June 2, 2006

Spirit of Recovery Summit

Five Vermont mental health and substance abuse disaster preparedness team members from VDH, UVM and FAHC attended the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) sponsored summit, The Spirit of Recovery: All-Hazards Behavioral Health Preparedness and Response – Building on the Lessons of Katrina, Rita and Wilma, in New Orleans, LA, on May 22-24, 2006. The conference addressed topics such as high risk populations, evacuation and displacement issues, suicide prevention, policy and funding issues, medications, substance abuse services and relapse prevention, risk communication, data and research. Of particular interest were presentations at the beginning of each day by survivors, family members and responders of the gulf coast hurricanes from Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas whose stories of survival, recovery and resilience were both moving and informative. It was also an opportunity to meet people from around the country who do this work, learn about their experiences and participate in regional planning sessions to identify common needs, resources and strategies for regional collaboration. The key messages for all states and territories were “planning and practice, practice, practice”!

National Study on Effective Financing Strategies for System of Care

Vermont has been chosen as one of the five sites for the National Study on Effective Financing Strategies for System of Care for children and adolescents. A site visit was conducted on June 1st and 2nd by an associate affiliated by the Research and Training Center for Children’s Mental Health at the University of South Florida. The purpose of the study is to develop a better understanding of the financing structures and strategies necessary to support systems of care for children and adolescents with behavioral health disorders and for their families, to examine how these financing components operate separately and collectively, and to promote policy changes through dissemination of study findings and technical assistance to state and local policymakers and their partners.

Vermont was chosen because it is a national leader in developing collaborative systems of care for children’s mental health. The site review will include meeting with state representatives and the Baird Center.

FUTURES PROJECT

Special Meeting of Futures Advisory Committee Called

A special meeting of the Futures Advisory Committee is called for Monday, June 12th from 9:00 – 12:00 at Conference Room 2B at the Health Department at 108 Cherry Street in Burlington. Frank Pitts of Architecture Plus will present the “program of space needs” for both the primary and smaller inpatient capacities. The presentation will also address: the advantages of co-locating

the new primary program with a tertiary hospital, the development parameters on the Fletcher Allen campus, and an analysis of the pros and cons of different site options.

In addition to reviewing and discussing the architectural work, the Futures Advisory Committee will develop a recommendation to Secretary Cindy LaWare on the inpatient bed capacity Vermont needs by 2016. The advisory committee's discussion will be informed by the actuarial report, a preliminary recommendation from inpatient and community clinical leaders in Vermont and the planning efforts to date.

Agenda Change to June 9 Care Management Work Group Meeting

The care management work group will meet Friday June 9th at 9:00 a.m. as scheduled at the Corrections Chapel Conference room of the Waterbury Office Complex. However, in addition to briefly reviewing the protocol development work, committee members will work to develop a recommendation on inpatient bed capacity for Vermont by 2016. Composed of medical and program directors of the inpatient and community mental health services system, the care management work group is uniquely positioned to recommend inpatient bed capacity. The work group will consider:

- the planning efforts to date
- the actuarial report
- the factors driving inpatient use in Vermont

As always, all members of the Futures Advisory Committee are welcome to attend this work group meeting. Many thanks to the care management group for re-focusing their meeting on the question of needed psychiatric bed capacity for Vermont.

Actuarial Report

The final actuarial report from Milliman, Inc. is posted with this update. This report addresses the prevalence rates of mental illness, provides an analysis of the psychiatric inpatient needs of incarcerated individuals, offers benchmarking comparisons with other states, reviews Vermont's recent history of hospital use, and considers trends that will impact mental health care in the future. The report offers three concluding scenarios on inpatient bed capacity:

- Maintain the status quo – 65 Beds
 - Make no changes to the service delivery system.
 - By 2016 the needed capacity at VSH or its successor facility would be 65 beds.
- Partial implementation – 53 Beds
 - The new inpatient programs are created but only 50% of the non-inpatient alternatives in the Futures plan are implemented.
 - By 2016 the needed capacity at VSH or its successor facility would be 53 beds.
- Full implementation – 41 Beds
 - All aspects of the Futures plan are fully funded and implemented.
 - By 2016 the needed capacity at VSH or its successor facility would be 41 beds

Norma Wasko Joins the Futures Team

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Norma Wasko, Ph.D. to the position of Senior Policy Advisor for the Futures Project. Most recently Norma has been the VDH program

administrator of a federal grant to advance public and private sector system development to build the emergency response capacity of Vermont's hospital and medical service delivery system. Prior to this, Norma led the development of a public health surveillance system and state plan for asthma. In addition, Norma worked for the Division of Health Care Administration (1992-1999) as a policy analyst and health care administrator, and was one of the architects of the quality assurance and quality improvement system for Vermont's innovative Medicaid 1115 Waiver. Norma helped to create a generation of social workers in Vermont through her leadership in the Adelphi University School of Social Work M.S.W. program and is a highly regarded facilitator and clinician. Norma joins Judy Rosenstreich, Senior Policy Advisor, Diane Cota, Administrative Assistant, and Beth Tanzman, Project Director, working on development and implementation of the Futures project.

VERMONT STATE HOSPITAL CENSUS

The Vermont State Hospital Census was 46 as of midnight Wednesday night. The average census for the past 45 days was 49.6.